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TITLE: Innovative Strategies for the Delivery of Adolescent HIV Prevention Services

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ISSUES: Los Angeles County has the highest number of incarcerated/probationary adolescents in the nation, with youth entering the system annually. The number of males is greater than the number of females and makes up approximately 95% of the incarcerated youth exposed to various HIV prevention services. Ranging in ages of 13-19 years old, all are members of subculture and are experiencing a steady increase in HIV transmission rates. While few of the youth experience injection drug use, other drug use is common as is unprotected sex, commercial or "survival" sex used in exchange of money and drugs; all of these factors increase the youth's risk of HIV transmission.

SETTINGS: The Behavior Change and Skills Building Prevention Services project is conducted in the juvenile justice system of Los Angeles County. The sites include juvenile halls, probationary camps and continuing education schools.

PROJECT: John Wesley Community Health Institute, Inc., currently is funded by the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention through the County of Los Angeles, Office of AIDS Programs and Policies, and delivers the services in conjunction with the County's Probationary Health Services Department. Seven education sessions are facilitated by an Outreach Education Specialist and a Health Education Assistant. These sessions assess the youth's learning styles with the Learning Preference Inventory tool (a one-to-one behavior change counseling session), HIV risk, and the youth's ability to judge risks. A variety of educational strategies are used to deliver the services including role plays, discussion and counseling.

RESULTS: The results from a Learning Preference Inventory (LPI) conducted suggests that there may be differences between the genders' learning styles. The results from the HIV risk scores suggest that there are differences between gender as well.

LESSONS LEARNED: These results indicate the need for a variety of innovative prevention strategies which target high-risk youth.

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